

Rockford Historic Preservation Commission

2012 Annual Report

Over the course of 2012, the Rockford Historic Preservation Commission continued its role of reviewing renovation work in local historic districts and landmarks primarily. In addition to the usual review work, the commission reviewed and commented on two applications for properties to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places and the commission monitored one property with violations. Several Commission secretaries worked with the commission this year and one new appointment was added to the Historic Preservation Commission. Specific Commission activities over the past year included:

- Review of 11 requests for Certificates of Appropriateness
- Review of 106 review projects with the City of Rockford
- Application for two properties to be added to the National Register of Historic Places
- CLG 3 Year Evaluation

Here in more detail is our year in review.

Cases Reviewed

Rockford's Historic Preservation Ordinance requires that a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) be issued by the Preservation Commission before any changes may be made to the exterior of locally designated properties. Of the 11 applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness submitted to the Commission in 2012, 10 were approved, none were denied, and 1 was laid over. Of the 11 applications, 4 were from Brown's Hills/Knightsville, 3 from Haight Village, 1 from Indian Terrace, 1 from the Garfield Avenue District, and the remaining 1 for individual landmark sites. Here are the highlights on an application reviewed by the Commission.

Midway Theater (721 East State Street) On March 23, 2012, a portion of the roof over the theater



section of the Midway Theater collapsed, necessitating the owner to apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the safe deconstruction of the remaining roofing and structural members, and installation of an appropriate new structure and roofing system. The owner came before the Historic Preservation Commission and presented photographs depicting the new roof line as well as engineered drawings to demonstrate the full height of the new roof at the ridge. Though not the original wood construction, the new roof structure presented minimized visual impact to the public way while seeking to provide a more stable solution.



Local Designations

The Commission did not receive any applications for new local landmarks or historic districts in 2012.

Surveys

No new areas were surveyed in 2012.

Monitoring

One property was monitored during the 2012 year. The single family residence located at 816 Brown Hills Court had some missing bricks and landscaping features around the property that had fallen into disrepair. The HPC recommended code enforcement review and request these items be corrected. During this process, the property was purchased by a bank and the code enforcement case was closed for the previous owner, and was noted that these would be required of the bank or new owner. As of the end of 2012, the repairs had yet to be completed, and a new Property Maintenance Report was submitted to the bank for repairs and compliance. We will continue to monitor this in the New Year.

Other Commission Activities

National Register Applications: The Historic Preservation Commission reviewed and assisted in the recommendation of two properties within Rockford to be added to the National Register of Historic Places.

The first of these is the Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory located at 1011 Auburn Street in the oldest cemetery in Rockford. The Richardsonian Romanesque building, designed by architect Henry Lord Gay, was built in 1891 and features rusticated limestone walls, round arched doors and windows, and a large tower. Other design details include stained glass and leaded windows; copper cornice, scuppers, roof ridge tiles, and downspouts. A historic addition was building in 1921, designed by architect Frank B. Gibson to compliment the original building while still being practical with the

design. Gibson gave the chapel a facelift and designed a garden-like reception room filled with plants and a water feature, a peaceful retreat for grieving loved ones.

The second property is the Kenneth and Phyllis Laurent House located at 4646 Spring Brook Road. The hemicycle Usonian single story house was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in 1949 and constructed between 1951-1952, and was built of Chicago common brick and red tidewater cypress. The house hugs the property and blends with the natural landscape and site contours. Beyond the signature design of Frank Lloyd Wright, this house is also significant as an early pioneer in incorporating a single family residence with Accessible design.

Section 106 Review: During the 2012 year, there were several cellular antenna array upgrades at existing locations, some of which triggered Section 106 reviews being sent to the RHPC. Upon review of the existing conditions at these locations, and their visual impact to the surrounding historic areas, recommendations were made to minimize additional visual impact to the greatest extent possible, and where possible, to provide screening of equipment which could not be located away from the public view.

Other: As part of our status as a Certified Local Government (CLG) an evaluation is performed every 3 years to review the activities of the Historic Preservation Commission and ensure they are complying with the regulations of the State. In 2012, Catherine O'Connor with the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency came to review the current status of the Rockford Historic Preservation Commission and gave the RHPC a favorable evaluation, thanks in large part to past efforts by previous Historic Preservation Commission Secretaries. Catherine also presented some possible grants available to update surveys and further the education of the Commission relating to community efforts to preserve their local treasures.

Commission Members as of January 2013

Janna Bailey (Member of a Historical Society)

Becky Lichty (Open Position)

Ald. Doug Mark (Member of City Council)

Vickie Krueger (Realtor)

Scott Sanders (Landscape Architect)

Vacant (Resident of a Local Historic District)

Vacant (Licensed Architect)